

INTRODUCTION

Tobacco use, according to WHO, is regarded to be the chief preventable cause of death around the world. WHO attributes about 4 million deaths a year to tobacco use. This figure is expected to increase to 10 million by 2030 and 7 million of these deaths will occur in developing countries.

The GYTS is a worldwide collaborative surveillance initiative that includes governments and NGOs under mainly the leadership and support of the WHO TFI and the CDC of the United States of America. The GYTS is a school based tobacco specific survey, which focuses on adolescents aged 13-15 years. There are over 100 countries in various stages of participating in this survey.

The survey is aimed at documenting and monitoring of prevalence of tobacco use such as smoking cigarettes, cigars, pipes and the use of smokeless tobacco. In addition, this survey assesses learners' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes related to tobacco use, behaviors, minors' access to tobacco, smoking cessation programmes, environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), school curriculum media and advertising.

The survey is a process of data collection, analysis and dissemination of representative and reliable information, which can be compared across countries. GYTS is also intended to enhance the capacity of governments, NGOs and individuals within countries to design, implement and evaluate tobacco control and prevention surveillance programs.

The project is conceived as a dynamic and interactive process whereby the activities and products of each phase will be used to inform and guide the subsequent activities and this will include harnessing the evidence from data for action, analyzing country data and undertaking new areas of research to support actions and establishing research based evidence for future actions.

THE WHO RESOLUTIONS

Between 1970 and 1995, WHO adopted 14 resolutions on the need for both national and international tobacco control policies. Four of the 14 resolutions are relevant to the UNF project-GYTS. Member states were encouraged to implement comprehensive tobacco control strategies that contain the following:

- (a) Measures to ensure that non-smokers receive effective protection, to which they are entitled, from involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke.
- (b) Measures to promote abstinence from the use of tobacco so as to protect children and young people from becoming addicted.
- (c) The establishment of programmes of education and public information on tobacco and health issues, including smoking cessation programmes, with active involvement of the health professions and media.
- (d) Monitoring trends in smoking and other forms of tobacco use, tobacco related diseases, and effectiveness of national smoking control action.